



# Heart to Heart

## September 16, 2006 Meeting

NTRWA Presents:

### “So You Want to Write that Weird Stuff: A Guide to Fantasy/Futuristic/Paranormal Romance”

With Gail Dayton

The paranormal market is hot right now, but there are a few things writers probably ought to know before trying their hand at it. This workshop will first take a stab at defining the differences between the fantasy, the futuristic, and the paranormal. Then Gail will talk about how to come up with ideas for something that isn't a vampire or a werewolf. Finally, she'll discuss that all-important paranormal/

fantasy feel. Just how weird does it need to be, to make it a paranormal?

Gail is the author of *The One Rose* trilogy from Luna Books. The first book, The Compass Rose, was nominated for the RT Reviewer's Choice Award and the second book, The Barbed Rose, is in bookstores now. The third installment, The Eternal Rose, will be released in June 2007. She's also written for Silhouette Desire and her first book, Hide-and-Sheikh, was nominated for a RITA as a 2002 Best First Book.

*For your born writer, nothing is so healing as the realization that he has come upon the right word.*

*Catherine Drinker Bowen*

## Post-Conference Edition

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## President's Corner

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First, let me say how proud I was to represent our Chapter at the National Conference in Atlanta. I have attended many conferences over the years, but I have to say Atlanta will always hold a special place in my memory because I was representing, in my opinion, the best chapter of RWA.

That said, Atlanta was also the conference where I had the most to gain. I had spent the last twelve months completing two manuscripts. I had two appointments, one with a Sr. Editor of Harlequin and one with Agent Paige Wheeler of Folio. So, I left DFW Airport with a good feeling of a successful conference ahead of me.

After a full day on Wednesday, I had dinner with friends and an agent who owned her own boutique agency. (No, I didn't pitch. Bad manners and all that!) By Thursday, I realized my appointment with the Sr. Editor wasn't going to work. I turned in the appointment and picked up another with Sha-Shana Creighton of Creighton & Associates. Now I had two agent appointments for Friday.

I already had my pitches down, so I spent some time in the bar Thursday night. I ended up having drinks with Karen Whiddon and her agent Lucienne Diver of Spectrum (she bought!) and Jennifer Jackson of Donald Maas. I found out Jennifer liked urban fantasy and asked if I could send a query. She said sure. I was pretty happy at that point. If nothing else went well, then at least I had a query with Jennifer Jackson.

Friday, I showed up for my agent appointments and picked up a cancelled appointment with Jessica Faust of Bookends. She requested the full of my urban fantasy! Ten minutes later, Sha-Shana Creighton requested the first half of my urban fantasy and the first 100 pages of my single title romantic suspense. I went from there to Paige Wheeler, who requested a partial of

both books. Not bad for a Friday morning.

By then it was lunch and I was due at the Passionate Ink Luncheon. I met the agent with the boutique agency, who requested I pitch my urban fantasy, which I did. We spent the walk from the Georgia Aquarium to the hotel talking about my book. She requested the full!

On Saturday, I went to a couple of book signings and Cherry Adair invited me to pitch my book to her editor, Kate Duffy of Kensington. So, I did. She said send it. (Now, I have to pick one!)

When I returned home, the agent I'd pitched to after the Passionate Ink luncheon had emailed me. She'd been to my website and read my partial. She wanted to make sure I'd put her on my list of agents to send to!! Now, that just doesn't happen. Not to me, anyway.

On a side note, the e-publisher I'd queried about my short contemporary requested the full on my 2004 Hot Prospect winner! Now I have three manuscripts going out.

So that's my conference experience. Yes, Atlanta will always hold a special place in my heart. You can bet I'm working hard, polishing my MSs. I'd love to be attending the 2007 Dallas conference as a published author.

Happy Writing,  
Sherry Davis  
President

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## 2006 NTRWA Board Members & Liaisons

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# A Man Among Two Thousand Women—The RWA Atlanta Conference

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By Ron Campbell

Atlanta was my second RWA National Conference and by far the most productive and exciting. Despite getting lost trying to find the Marriott, Kim and I arrived around noon on Tuesday. Our check-in process went very smoothly and our room on the 44th floor had a wonderful view of downtown Atlanta.

Around noon, we met several of our friends down in the lobby and waited for the much-anticipated conference registration. The registration process was a little confusing because they had the signs posted in reverse alphabetical order. The first thing I did when I got my conference package was to check my name badge and make sure it had my PRO status on it. It did, but they had my name as Ronald instead of Ron; no big deal.

Kim and I hurried to our room to check our packet and free books. Much to our pleasure we found some real winners; plus most of our books were not duplicates. The biggest find

in my bag was the latest paranormal novel published by MIRA, which was the editor I had an appointment with. I spent a lot of time reading this excellent novel and making notes. At my editor interview my ability to compare my work to this book assisted me in obtaining a rare full manuscript request from MIRA.

The Goody Room was excellent. The best items were breath spray, a lighted key chain, a travel hair brush, and various pens. The most unique item were condoms.

Wednesday evening was the Literacy Autographing event. Angi Platt and her volunteers did a superior job with this charity event. During this event, I had a negative experience with an author. She was extremely rude. At first I thought it was because I was a male, but nope, she was rude to most of the people who stopped by her table. I came in contact with dozens of participants and only one of them felt that a man did not belong in RWA. Ninety-nine percent of my experiences were positive.

The Pro Retreat on Thursday

morning was very informative. The best advice was to register your domain name and start your web site; even before you are published. The second best advice was: a bad agent is worse than no agent.

Thursday afternoon and evening I read the MIRA book and practiced my pitch. Late Thursday evening a group of us got together to practice; Angi was invaluable in helping me shorten my pitch. However, the next day before my interview Mindy's catch phrase popped into my mind.

My editor appointment was Friday morning from 9:20-9:30 am with Susan Pezzack of MIRA/Spice. I arrived early to the mass confusion of what I would compare to a casting cattle call. During my time spent in this area, I was shocked at the number of people who did not show up for their scheduled interview and basically ruined their careers. Susan Pezzack was very pleasant and personable. She liked my pitch, asked me several probing questions, and asked me for my full manuscript.

*Continued on page 10...*

## Administration

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**PAN** (Published Authors Network) is the name given to the discussion group intended to meet the needs of writers published or contracted to publish works in the romance genre.

**Heart to Heart** is published monthly by NTRWA, a non-profit organization founded in March of 1983 by aspiring and published writers of romance fiction.

**Heart to Heart** welcomes articles for publication in its monthly issues. Articles should contain fewer than 1000 words and pertain to matters of interest to romance writers.

**Heart to Heart** reserves the right to edit according to space or clarity, and to refuse articles that its editorial staff deems inappropriate for its readership. Deadline for publication is the 25th of each month.

**SISTER CHAPTERS:** Feel free to reprint articles from our newsletter as long as proper credit is provided for the chapter and the individual author.

**Non-RWA organizations** please contact the editor regarding reprints.

# Meeting Minutes for August 19, 2005

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By Jen FitzGerald

Meeting called to order at 12:18 by President Sherry Davis.

Ron Campbell moved, and it was seconded, to approve the July meeting minutes as published in the August 2006 newsletter. The motion passed.

President Sherry Davis gave a report on some things she learned from the President's Retreat at the National Conference. Next year, due to a conflict with another large convention at the hotel, the RWA National Conference will be held at the beginning of July-the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 14<sup>th</sup>.

VP/Program Director Shannon Canard gave a report on the Fall Writers Roundup, including a book signing before the mixer. NT will help sponsor a book signing for Cherry Adair and Cindy Dees at the Barnes & Noble from 5-7 pm near the conference hotel & the Blue Mesa Grill, where the mixer will be held.

Membership Director Carolyn Williamson reported that our chapter currently has 72 members. Marilyn Eudaly introduced our three visitors.

Treasurer Tara Waldie presented the

treasurer's report. Patricia Vermeire moved, and it was seconded, to accept the treasurer's report.

Newsletter Editor Jen FitzGerald requested articles from RWA National Conference attendees for a special post-conference edition of the newsletter.

Publicity Director Angi Platt report on the web site and reminded everyone that our web address is now ntrwa.ORG.

NT25 Committee Chair Jen FitzGerald reported on what the committee has been discussing regarding the celebration of NT's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. Jen invited anyone interested to be a part of the committee.

Audio Librarian Jen FitzGerald announced that the chapter had purchased the complete 2006 workshop on CD collection, along with the 24 best workshops from 2005. The titles available on CD will be soon be growing. It was announced that although Bill Stephens Productions has given permission for chapters to make copies for chapter libraries, individuals are not allowed to make their own copies. The complete list of cassettes and CDs is available on the web site. A one-time \$10 deposit is required to check out cassettes

or CDs from the chapter library. Up to three items are allowed to be checked out per month.

Angi Platt moved, and it was seconded, to update our membership application to include check-boxes to a) acknowledge that members will not make personal copies of audio library materials, and b) to grant permission to the chapter to use any photos with him or her in them on publicity materials and on the web site. The motion passed.

Sherry announced that Tara Waldie volunteered to chair the Nominations/Elections Committee and that Patricia Vermeire volunteered to serve on the committee.

GE Contest Chair Angi Platt announced that several agents and editors are already lined up as final round judges for the 2006-2007 GE Contest.

Shannon Canard moved, and it was seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 12:50.

## Visiting NTRWA

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Anyone interested in the romance genre is invited to attend NTRWA meetings and workshops.

Visitors may attend three times before NTRWA requires they become members. All members of NTRWA must be members in good standing of Romance Writers of America (RWA).

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## RWA National Conference ~ A First-Timer's Perspective

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By Mindy Obenhaus

As the un-air conditioned taxi I shared with four other writers pulled up to the Marriott Marquis, my heart raced with excitement. I had no idea what lay beyond those sliding glass doors, only that I couldn't wait to find out.

After being presented with my first Georgia peach, I found my way to my room and the most amazing bed I've ever had the privilege to sleep in. Little did I know, I wouldn't be using it much.

At the conference registration desk, I was greeted by a friendly woman with a great Aussie accent. She graciously guided this newbie through the brief process and I walked away with a brand new bag and no less than ten pounds of books. I know because I weighed it.

I went to National expecting to make lots of new friends, which actually started at gate 29C at DFW

airport, so after another quick trip to my room to deposit my mother load, I was off for more adventures in conferencing. In the hotel sports bar, which was the cheapest place to eat, until we all discovered the food court in the mall adjoining the hotel, the women had definitely taken over. Dinner was spent with new friends, old friends, and others who joined our dining experience because we were all part of the same sisterhood. Sorry Ron.

By the time I managed to drag myself upstairs, which happened to be only on the sixth floor, while many other were as high as 48, I was too excited to sleep. I couldn't wait to see what the rest of the week had in store for me.

The next day, I joined several other inspirational authors for a one day mini-conference of Faith, Hope, & Love, then headed for the ballroom to help out my friend Angi Platt with the book signing. I nearly fell over when she asked me if I would

mind helping Christina Dodd. Surely this was a trick question. Christina, as I now get to call her, was fabulous and very down-to-earth.

At this point, I need to mention that the Literacy Signing is also a great place to people watch. I saw two women I'm pretty sure were men in drag and some of the strangest choices of clothing and hair color. One should always check the length of their dress before going out in public. I hadn't planned on seeing the full moon over Atlanta, nor did I really want to.

As the week progressed, sleep still eluded me. Many people opted for naps or bowing out of workshops to sleep late. I chose the exhaustion route because I was too afraid I'd miss something. But among all the craziness and fabulous keynote speakers, there were a few things that stood out to me.

*Continued on page 9...*

## Many Happy Returns...

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Gail Dayton, 9/8

Marilyn Eudaly, 9/6

Shannon Canard, 9/23

Sheryl Pinckney-Maas, 9/27



# Pitching Your Book at the Top of the Escalators

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By Angi Platt

PLEASE do not forward these articles anywhere except in the Heart to Heart. Thanks.

In 2001, I met Christine Zika at the last regional conference she attended, Dreamin' In Dallas. We hit it off and have kept in casual contact over the years. Each conference, no matter where we meet, she asks if I have something to send her. Right there in front of God and everybody. That's my disclaimer, folks. You wait for the editor or agent to ask you...the rule of thumb about NOT pushing your manuscript under the bathroom stall still applies.

This year, Christine and I literally ran into each other at the top of the

escalators. No foolin'. After a hug and a how are you, she asked that normally dreaded question: So, do you have anything for me?

This year, I said yes.

In less than two minutes I pitched the concept of my series. She asked how much is written? I replied the proposal. She asked, how fast can you get it to me? I replied, I'm sure Roberta can get it to you next week.

That was it. Another quick thank you and we didn't see each other until Saturday night. Christine won her first Editor's RITA, putting Jodi Thomas into the Hall of Fame. I congratulated her, we chatted again, she introduced me to her colleagues and told them she couldn't wait to

get my proposal.

Whew... My manuscript has a lot to live up to. Hope.

The proposal was sent three days after I returned from conference. Another important rule of thumb -- don't exaggerate to an editor, keep your word.

Angi Platt was a 2004 Golden Heart finalist with her manuscript Love On the Run which also recently won the Barclay Sterling Long Contemporary.

# RWA in Atlanta—A Positive Experience

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By Karen Whiddon

If asked to use one word to describe the RWA National Conference in Atlanta, I would choose POSITIVE. Everywhere I went, everyone I talked to, despite rumors swirling around about potential line closings, smiled and felt optimistic. My conference experience was good despite a looming August 1<sup>st</sup> deadline, which meant I had to spend vast amounts of time in my room working on my laptop.

The best part of conference for me is seeing friends I only see once a year, making new friends, and seeing my editors and my agent. The Nocturne signing was absolutely fantastic and they ran out of over 100 books in 15 minutes. Leslie Wainger and Tara Gavin of Harlequin positively vibrated with excitement.

The steakhouse near the hotel had

marvelous steaks, and the hamburgers in the Sports Bar were to die for - can you tell I gained weight this trip? <G> I wasn't as fond of the Asian restaurant where Patience Smith took a group of Silhouette authors for lunch, but had fun just the same.

One of my fave things was the Moonlight-Madness thing, during which I sold jewelry made by my wonderful agent Lucienne Diver. Afterward, wanting to celebrate another of her authors' awards win, she bought drinks for a group of us. Meeting Jennifer Skully and her critique partner was awesome, and I really enjoyed getting to know Andrea Geist, Sherry Davis, Mary Kennedy, and others from NT. We had a blast that night!

On Friday, Dorchester had their author dinner at the Trader Vic's restaurant in the hotel across the street (great Mai-Tais, so-so food), and the Harlequin

party this year was at the Ritz-Carlton. They always have a dessert thingee with a chocolate fountain and - an open bar! (Are you starting to see a reoccurring theme here?) We drank and danced and when I left after midnight, the party was still going strong.

Because of my deadline, I was unable to attend workshops, luncheons, or any of the things I had planned. I did finish the book however, and enjoyed the conference.

Karen Whiddon writes for both Dorchester and Silhouette. Her 15<sup>th</sup> book comes out in November (Missing Magic from Dorchester Lovespell) and she has two Nocturnes out in January 2007 and March 2007.

# Spotlight On... Kim Campbell

By Gina Lee Nelson

***Kim, thanks for being our Spotlight this month. How long have you been writing romance? When did you start writing fiction?***

I've been writing romance for about 10 years, seriously for about two. I made Ron get serious about his, so as they say, what's good for the goose... I no longer had an excuse NOT to write. I had to get serious if I wanted to be published. It was at that time that I told Ron that I had thought of joining RWA for years, and here we are about a year and a half later. I started writing fiction when I was about eight. I thought I was going to be the next big thing to come along. My first serious writing project and submission, when I was about 11, was a country song I sent to Glenn Campbell. (Man, I had a crush on him.) Hmmm. Wow! It just dawned on me -- I married a Campbell. Wonder what Freud would have to say about that? Anyway, I entered song contests just about every week when I was a pre-teen. Sadly for the country music world, they were never used, at least as far as I know.

***What's your favorite genre to write or to read?***

My favorite genre to write is the western. I suppose that goes back to my Dad. He and I would watch westerns until the sun came up or the cows came home, whatever. When I was young I told my Dad once, "You aren't my real Dad. My real dad is John Wayne!" and he teased me about it until the day he died. He even gave me an old John Wayne book and wrote an inscription in it to my mom thanking her for "that little fling in 1962. I will never forget it." And then my Dad signed it, John Wayne. I still have that book and I laugh every time I see it. It brings

back great memories of my Daddy.

I love to read all genres. The first romance I picked up was Kathleen

Woodiwiss' *The Flame and the Flower*. I have read all of her books and re-read them when I can. I love Larry McMurtry, Nora Roberts. I just finished Candy Havens' *Charmed and Dangerous* and can hardly wait for the next. I am currently reading Stephanie Bond's *Bodymovers*. There is no one special person or genre, except for Woodiwiss.

***That's a hoot about your dad and John Wayne, and you married a Campbell. Wow, good going! Tell us something about your background. Where did you grow up?***

I loved writing songs, poems and the most heart wrenching stories. I was a very dramatic child. I was born and raised and have, except for a brief stint in St. Louis, Mo., lived entirely in Fort Worth, Texas. I have one brother, Robert. My parents were born in Texas. We moved in the 70s to Lake Worth. I attended LW Junior high and graduated from LW High School in 1980. I have attended Texas Wesleyan and UNT and I'm still trying to finish my degree in English Literature. My life since then has been pretty exciting. I have one son, Christian. He is the third generation to attend University of North Texas and lived in the dorm that his dad, step-mom, aunts, uncles and grandparents lived in. He'll be graduating in the spring.

My dad was so small when he was born that he had to be brought home in a shoe box. My mom was the chief clerk at the court of criminal appeals for 33 years and it was in her courtroom that George Lott went on his killing spree. Fortunately, it was payday and my mom had just walked out of the courtroom when he opened fire, killing 2 and wounding several. Christian's other grandfather on his step-mom's side is former senate majority leader Dick Armey. My cousin was just appointed as Assistant to the Ambassador of China and moved to Beijing. My brother in law, Ron English, is an incredible artist and if you saw *Super Size Me* you saw his art throughout the entire movie. My sister-in-law, Tarssa Yazdani, is a writer and poet. We are just one big happy

family and we all get along. (How weird is that?) Ron and I have been married for two years and have fourteen grandkids and just found out that number fifteen is due in March. (Surely, they've figured out how this is happening.)

***Are you sure there's not a President or famous bank robber in your family somewhere?***

Well... now that you've asked, I did have an uncle, Joe Palmer. He was at Eastham serving 25 years for robbery. He tried to escape with the help of his fellow bank robbers, Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow. A prison guard was killed and he went to the electric chair after that little episode But that is it. I think.

***What are you currently working on? Any submissions with agents or editors?***

My first ever pitch was in Atlanta. It was terrifying. I pitched to Brenda Chin and she was just the nicest, loveliest person you could ever hope to meet. She requested a partial even though she doesn't do westerns (you will hear about that in the newsletter.). I am submitting several stories right now and working to get all the kinks out of the current ones. I am trying my hand at contemporary single title. We'll see how that goes. I have found I love to write everything. Some things are more of a struggle than others. My goal at this point is to have PRO status before the end of the year and be on my way to being published by the Dallas Conference in '07.

***Kim, what do you struggle with as a writer?***

My biggest problem is pretty evident; I start writing and my mind goes into overdrive. I am trying to think and type and it sometimes winds up sounding like I am rambling, too much stream of consciousness or unconsciousness. One major problem of being a constant talker.

*Continued on page 16...*



Newsletters are now available in electronic format.

If you are interested in receiving your newsletter via email,  
please contact Jen FitzGerald at [jen@stormsedge.com](mailto:jen@stormsedge.com).

# Member News

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Congratulations to Karen Kelley...

Check out the September issue of Romantic Times Magazine.

Karen's upcoming anthology, TEXAS BAD BOYS garnered four stars!

It should hit the shelves somewhere around September 6th.

Check out Karen's Web site for contest information: [www.authorKarenKelley.com](http://www.authorKarenKelley.com)

Congratulations to Angi Platt for winning

First Place in the Long Contemporary category of the Barclay Sterling Contest.

Congratulations to Mindy Obenhaus ~ Krista Stroeve of Steeple Hill and Natasha Kern, an agent, both requested a partial of her 80,000 word Inspirational Romantic Suspense titled Willow Springs.

Congratulations to Carolyn Williamson who has been asked to give a talk and to sign her book

There IS Life After Lettuce at Diabetic Designs, a store in Fort Worth, on

Saturday, September 30, from 11 am to 1 pm.

Wow, you all were a prolific bunch this past month... Kudos to all of you who wrote and edited and proudly listed your totals, but due to space considerations, only the top five producers will be listed...

So many people have been writing and adding their name to the list and that's a very good thing.

Everyone keep up the good work!

## NEW PAGES ~ Top 5

Alley Hauldren, 2000

Ron Campbell, 180

Kim Campbell, 70

Shelley Bradley, 68

Nikki Duncan & Laura Martello, 40

## EDITED PAGES ~ Top 5

Alley Hauldren, 1000

Nikki Duncan, 600

Carolyn Williamson, 313

Sherry Davis, 312

Shelley Bradley, 270

Way to go everyone. Keep those fannies in the chair and the fingers on the keyboard!



# A First-Timer's Perspective Continued...

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*Continued from page 5...*

The networking. Holy romance writers, Batman! This was the Who's Who of romance writing. You never knew when you'd find yourself in an elevator with an agent you've been seeking, or sitting next to one of your favorite authors in a workshop. Now, I'd heard all this before going, but I thought, yeah, right. This is a big place with lots of people. What are the odds? Odds are. . . good.

Then there are the workshops. Some

were good, some not so good. Pick and choose what works for you, but don't over extend yourself. You can always buy the tape. Unless it's one that's not taped, in which case you should have opted for that one in the first place.

What stood out above all else was the fact that you had two thousand plus women, and a few men, supporting and encouraging each other. It wasn't about competition. It was about success. Everyone wanted everyone to succeed. How

cool is that? I'm proud to belong to an organization like RWA. Hope you can join me next year.

Mindy Obenhaus is a mom of 5 and grandma of 2. She's been writing for two and a half years, starting about the time her youngest entered kindergarten. She's a PRO member of RWA and has been a member of North Texas Romance Writers since May of 2005. Her first manuscript, *Willow Springs*, won first place in the Happily Ever After contest and is currently under consideration by Steeple Hill.

## My Conference Experience

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By Shannon Canard

I returned from the conference, exhausted and exhilarated as I always do. Here are the highlights of what I learned and from whom:

- ◆ The work is its own reward – PRO Retreat with Lani Diane Rich and Susan Crandall.
- ◆ The six most important words for writing a bestseller: Keep. The. Reader. In. The. Story. And, ah, you also need a riveting plot, unforgettable characters, a unique world, and a strong voice. From Susan Elizabeth Phillips.
- ◆ Editors troll the fan fic sites looking for writers. And offer them contracts! From the PRO Retreat, editor Cindy Hwang of Berkley.
- ◆ Books that defy categories, i.e. fantasy, straight romance, suspense, etc. are the ones selling – PRO Retreat, editor Raelene Grolinski of Ellora's Cave.
- ◆ Editors like writers who are former journalists. They know deadlines and don't freak over revisions – PRO Retreat, agent Meg Ruley of the Rotrosen Agency.

- ◆ Agents use clients' entertaining blogs and professional Web sites as selling tools to editors -- PRO Retreat, agent Meg Ruley of the Rotrosen Agency.
- ◆ Editors like really clever titles. It catches their eye – Spotlight on Dorchester, editor Leah Hultenschmidt.
- ◆ Supposedly, women's top secret fantasies include:
  - ◆ sex with a stranger
  - ◆ sex with a celebrity
  - ◆ lesbian sex
  - ◆ sex in public
  - ◆ -there are more, but I just can't get into it...

From *How to Write Sexual Tension* with Linda Conrad

- ◆ There are "12 Steps to Intimacy" -- for women. (For men, I think there are only four. Maybe. But that's my opinion). From *Spice Up Your Romance* with Berkley author, Annette Blair. (Adapted by Linda Howard from *Intimate Behavior* by Desmond Morris).
- ◆ When using sensual words, the ones that begin with 'S' are the best. From *Spice Up Your Romance* with

Berkley author, Annette Blair.

- ◆ Women reveal personal details to strangers in order to create a sense of community – Men Talk Different with Laurie Brown.
- ◆ And the most important thing I learned at conference? That I write contemporary fantasy (with romantic elements, of course) – thank you, Kim Harrison! And mainstream southern fiction – the latter I would have missed if not for a fabulous workshop on Southern Fiction Writers with Mary Alice Monroe and agent Kimberly Whalen of Trident Media.

Shannon Canard is a freelance journalist and former newspaper reporter. With a M.S. in Information Science she is the Grandmaster of research and useless trivia. Based in Fort Worth, Texas, she is also the Vice President of the North Texas Romance Writers. In between traveling stints, she's writing a paranormal romance series and can be found blogging too often at <http://www.singedenefits.blogspot.com/>.

# A Man Among Two Thousand Women Continued...

*Continued from page 3...*

I left the interview on cloud nine. Later I learned how rare this request was as MIRA accepts only agented material.

My agent appointment wasn't until 3:10 with Julie Ramsey of The Knight Agency. Her profile indicated that she did not accept paranormal so I had a romantic suspense book to pitch to her. Now I had to practice that one.

All of the luncheon speakers were excellent. During the Friday lunch, I had the pleasure of sitting next to Raelene Gorlinsky, publisher of Ellora's Cave. She was very open and friendly and I learned a lot about her want list and her avoid list.

I arrived quite early for my appointment with Julie. I wanted to listen to what some of the other people had to say in the waiting area. One of the authors already had four appointments by simply sitting and

picking up the ones she wanted when someone didn't show. She gave me several tips, and told me about personalities of agents and editors.

Julie greeted me with a smile and a handshake. When I explained to her that I had a request from MIRA for a full paranormal manuscript she wanted to hear it. She was very attentive and easy to talk to. She asked more probing questions than the editor did. She asked that the manuscript be sent to her before I sent it to MIRA. She then wanted to know about the romantic suspense manuscript. She asked very detailed and probing questions. Then she asked me to send it to her also. We agreed that I wouldn't send that one to her until October. Julie Ramsey was wonderful, plus she gave me the time equivalent of two appointments. Now I really was pumped!

Friday night was the unsanctioned PRO dinner. From what I understand, the hotel really stuck it to PRO price-wise since this event

was not sanctioned by the RWA. The food was good, but unfortunately not everyone got to eat. The entire Knight Agency put on one heck of a presentation. Best of all, I was able to spend an additional forty minutes or so with Julie Ramsey at our group's table.

The Award Ceremony was a lot better run and scripted than the same event had been the year before in Reno. At the reception afterward, there was more networking and talking, not only to the members of NTRWA, but also to other authors and agents.

I strongly recommend you attend the conference next year in Dallas.

Ron Campbell has been writing around his day job as a CPA for 10 years. He currently has four completed manuscripts. He has recently submitted requested manuscripts to MIRA and The Knight Agency.

piquant \PEE-kunt\ adjective

- 1 : agreeably stimulating to the palate; especially : spicy
- 2 : engagingly provocative; also : having a lively arch charm

discomfit \diss-KUM-fit\ verb

- 1 : to frustrate the plans of : thwart
- 2 : to put into a state of perplexity and embarrassment : disconcert

recumbent \rih-KUM-bunt\ adjective

- 1 a : suggestive of repose : leaning, resting b : lying down
- 2 : representing a person lying down

# The Truth About Publishing Myths ~ Myth #8

By Shelley Bradley

8. Once you sell, your editor will always return emails/phone calls and read your material promptly.

In a word, maybe. This is one that really depends on your editor, at least in part. Some editors are notoriously slow, and that doesn't change much after the sale. Some are really time-oriented and on the ball and make communication a priority. But even with both types, there are shades of gray.

First, your editor may be busy with other authors who have more pressing issues or books to put into production NOW. That's just reality. Betsy Bestseller may have turned in a book late. That editor may have to rush to edit, get it copy edited, ensure the back cover copy is still valid with the finished manuscript, etc. Putting a book in production is no small feat. When my first editor had 7 or 8 books to put into production a month, she was a raving, tear-out-your-hair nut. That's a lot of reading, getting things copy edited, typeset, making sure valid blurbs make it into sales catalogs, etc. Maybe your editor also has meetings to deal with issues like cover art (these meetings start about year before the book hits the shelves!), titles, marketing, editorial strategy, etc. These things all take time. Some publishers insist that editors read a certain number of submissions from the slush pile every month just to keep things semi-sane. Then they are also the main contact when offers are made and accepted. And an author's answer-woman when there are questions.

So picture this day: Emily Editor has just received Betsy Bestseller's book. Well, Betsy wants to be paid for her hard work, right? She can't get paid until the editor reads the book and either approves it or sends back editorial comments/revision suggestions. But she has a 9 am title meeting to attend that will last 2 hours. Then they have an editorial pow-wow after lunch to decide which

books to buy among the recommended. After that, she's got an offer out to an agent on a new author's book, and the agent has made specific requests that will have to go through legal and the contract department, so she'll have to get those questions answered before she can answer the agent, which (hopefully) will enable the author to accept the offer. The Editorial Director has asked her to read 10 submissions from the slush pile by end of day Friday, and it's already Thursday afternoon. In the meantime, you're one of Emily's authors and you've sent her an email indicating that you want to chat about your ideas for a cover for your next book, which is due out in 15 months. Or would like to ask when your copy edits will be ready. Or...fill in the blank.

When my first editor had  
7 or 8 books to put into  
production a month,  
she was a raving,  
tear-out-your-hair nut.

She has a lot of other projects ahead of yours in priority. Betsy is a bestseller and must be kept happy (and well paid) in order to keep her around. Reading that book and either accepting or sending revision suggestions is probably priority 1. That title meeting can't be avoided, or who knows what her other authors' books will be called. She can't miss the meeting after lunch, because she's got a few books she's recommended they buy. And they'll be great, but she's afraid other publishers may snatch them up if she doesn't get them approved today, so she needs to pitch to the Editorial Director and get approval to get the offer started. More paperwork - ugh! And she needs to get the answers for the agent with the author whose book they've already made the offer on. There's a hole in the fall schedule, and this book is great as is. But they're going to have to get started on Monday with title, cover, etc. in order to have everything ready for the sales catalog, which is

printed 6 months before the book's release. She quickly leaves voicemails with the appropriate people in-house to get her answers and dashes off to meetings. The slush pile submissions...she'll have to take those home, along with Betsy's book. No time during office hours for that today. And the answers for you, well, they'll wait another day since they aren't urgent and she'll have to ask Suzy Scheduler for the answer.

Do you see how that works? There are a couple of things here.

- 1) Editors do much more than simply read books, accept and reject them, and provide editorial input.
- 2) If you're new or aren't far up the totem pole...you may not be priority 1. It just depends on what else is happening in her office and her life.
- 3) Internal politics and other people in the office can play a role in what your editor is doing and how she handles you.

This is just an example, but you get the idea. We whine and wail about why it takes so long for them to respond to our submissions... Maybe now you can see why. Editors (at least for the big NYC print publishers) live in a very expensive city, don't make a lot of money, work very long hours and most do it because they love books. Look at editors who have stayed in the romance genre for years and you'll see editors who admit they put up with some of the less glamorous elements of the job because they love romances and enjoy getting the books in the hands of other readers who love romances.

The author of sizzling contemporary, erotic and historical romances, Shelley Bradley lives in the southwest with her husband and daughter, juggling the many roles in her life: writer, mother, wife and all around laundress. In her "free" time, she is a reality TV junkie, enjoys reading, obsessively studying all things Harry Potter, doing step aerobics and weightlifting, and listening to an eclectic blend of music.

# The Brenda Chin Test

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By Angi Platt

Each year at conference you hear the same old story from editors: It Has To Be A Good Book. And it does. But there's also the personality and dependability factor.

I've always been impressed with how Brenda Chin (Sr. Editor, Harlequin) remembers names without name tags... Not only that, she remembers characters in specific manuscripts submitted to her. She also asks for ideas in her workshops and in the Harlequin Suite. Ideas that will get you a First Class Trip to her desk to be read. Weeeeelllll.....

I have a friend that wrote a concept in one of Brenda's workshops several years ago. At the end of the workshop, she was asked to submit the partial. But first she had to write the book. Hmmm.... No, first she had to come up with a plot. Okay...that took a while. Conference rolled around again. Brenda ran into my friend, "Hey, where's the book?" My friend said the partial was done, mailed it to Brenda after conference. Lines changed, Brenda sent recommendations for revisions to my friend.

Hmmm.... This required a new plot. Revisions. Rewrites. Time Passes.

Another year goes by. To see how it will do, my friend throws the rewrite into a contest (judged by one of Brenda's colleagues) and wins. Wow, not only that, she's got a request for a full. Then an email from Brenda... "Hey, where's the book?"

Yep, she remembered.

After a promise to finish the book and get it to her as soon as possible... another year passes. BUT fortunately, the book's finished before conference. Brenda assures my friend (in person) not to worry about the tardiness. BUT I warn my friend of something I'd heard about Ms. Chin many, many years ago. Well, not heard about...more like straight from Brenda herself.

Summary: 'I send revisions back to authors and wait to see how long it takes them to resubmit. Especially new authors. I sit back and wait. Then I slot their sales accordingly. The faster the revisions are submitted, the more books they'll get published.'

Ouch.

So in the Harlequin Suite this year, they had another contest. Write down the concept for a story. Yep...

right there in front of everybody. Write down and submit your concept in 50 words or less. And, yes, my friend did.

When she told me, the conversation went something like this:

"You're going to get a call you know."

"Naw...I blew it with her taking so long to write the first book."

"Nope, she's going to ask for this story and see how long it takes for you to write THIS one. It's a test."

Sure enough, one of Ms. Chin's associates called on Monday after the conference and requested the full manuscript. My friend is determined to finish it by October... of THIS year. :-)

She's determined to pass the test and sell the book.

Angi Platt has attended each national conference since 2000. She is represented by an agent and continues to submit manuscripts.

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## NT Book Club News

Join the NT Book Club the first Thursday of each month, 7:30 pm, at the North Richland Hills Barnes & Noble. Each month, the group meets to discuss a previously selected book. The company is great, the books are

usually good, and the discussion is always lively. Check out the selections for the next few months. If you see something that piques your interest, please feel free to read the book and join everyone at B&N.

September 7<sup>th</sup> ~ **The Measure of a Lady** by Deanne Gist  
October 5<sup>th</sup> ~ **Smitten** by Janet Evanovich

# Make Great Expectations Great!

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By Angi Platt

The Great Expectations contest always needs two things: volunteers and entries.

After you polish your manuscript for a submission for the Golden Heart, consider entering the GE. For NT members, it's approximately 25¢ a page for three critiques.

Are you ready to volunteer? Well,

anyone can. And chapter members should. The GE is the major money maker for the chapter. A successful contest means GREAT programs, GREAT speakers, a GREAT Writers Roundup.

The GE needs a few more category coordinators, and as always lots of judges. Don't know how to be a coordinator or a judge? There will be online training in October & November. To be a category

coordinator, you need a little extra time at the end of December. To be a judge, you need to commit to judge one electronic entry a week during January.

Contact Angi via email at [AngiPlatt@aol.com](mailto:AngiPlatt@aol.com) to volunteer.

All details are on the website [www.NTRWA.org](http://www.NTRWA.org). Can't get to the web? Email or call Angi and she'll mail the rules and entry form to you.

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## Nomination/Election Committee Article

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By Patricia Vermeire

It's that time again – time to take nominations for our 2007 Board. NT needs new officers and Board members. If you've been a member of NTRWA for at least a year, it's time for you to step up, volunteer your leadership, and give something back to your chapter. Please consider running for one of these offices.

**President** – runs meetings, listens a lot, helps Board make decisions

**Vice President** – covers meetings when President is out; helps wherever needed (see Program Director).

**Treasurer** – keeps financial records, handles money, prepares budget.

**Recording Secretary** – records & prepares meeting minutes.

**Membership Secretary** – takes applications, prepares roster, greets guests at meetings.

**Newsletter Editor** – compiles & sends out monthly newsletter.

**Publicity Director** – in charge of website & other chapter publicity

**Program Director** – plans meetings, invites speakers, in charge of annual writers workshop (this position is currently part of the Vice President's duties).

Don't have the time or qualifications? I'll bet you do. Most of these positions require only a few hours each month

outside the regular meetings. And the outgoing officer will teach you everything you need to know. Want more info? Email any member of the Board. They'll be happy to discuss the responsibilities and benefits of serving as an officer of your chapter. Or contact Tara Waldie or Patricia Vermeire. But don't delay – the Nominating Committee will soon be on the prowl. Volunteer now and pick the best job for you.

You're already a part of this chapter; why not contribute just a little bit more? Trust me -- your effort will make a difference. We can't run the chapter without you. NT needs your enthusiasm and fresh ideas. NT needs you.



## NTRWA presents The Fall Writers Roundup

### Keynote Speaker: Cherry Adair

With over a million books in print, USA Today Bestselling author Cherry Adair has garnered numerous awards for her innovative action-adventure novels. Cherry carved a niche for herself with her sexy, sassy, fast-paced, action adventure novels about the kick-butt anti-terrorist group, T-FLAC years before action adventure romances were popular.

Fascinated by far away places and exotic locals, Cherry has taken her readers to Egypt, South Africa, Europe, and South America with her nail-biting action and burning love scenes. Readers from all over the world are always suggesting new locations for the next T-FLAC adventure.

As a much sought-after speaker, Cherry gives lively classes on the craft of storytelling and the writing life. A favorite of reviewers and fans alike, she lives in the Pacific Northwest.

### Also in Attendance:

**Author Cindy Dees.** Cindy dropped out of high school at fifteen to go to the University of Michigan where she earned a degree in Russian and East European Studies. She then became the youngest woman pilot in the history of the United States Air Force. She flew supersonic jets, flew V.I.P. airlift at Andrews Air Force Base in Washington D.C., worked at the White House, was an escort pilot for Russian aircraft and crews—and engaged in espionage against the Russians on the side, and was the first woman in a squadron of 450 men to fly the world's largest cargo airplane, the C-5.

She's traveled to 42 countries on five continents, been arrested by the East German Secret police, held at gunpoint by the KGB, and amassed a lifetime supply of war stories. In her spare time she learned how to grow bonsai trees, became a professional Middle Eastern dancer, and took up Medieval reenacting for fun. So what's a girl to do with all these strange life experiences? Write books, of course.

**Agent Elaine Spencer** of The Knight Agency. Elaine joined The Knight Agency in September of 2005 to manage queries and submissions. She acts as the liaison between clients, publishers, and agents as Manuscript Coordinator TKA. With a strong background in both comparative literature and economics at the University of Georgia, she has experience with legal contracts and executive management, as well as writing, editing, and publishing.

Consistently producing strong results with a high degree of integrity, dedication, and efficiency, Elaine is actively acquiring clients.

Continued on next page...

**Editorial Assistant Tessa Woodward** of Avon Books.

Tessa has been with Avon since September 2005. She works with Carrie Feron on her impressive list of bestselling authors. She is looking to acquire well-written romances — especially Regency and Victorian historicals with strong heroines and sexy heroes.

### Panel of Career Experts:

**Sergeant Steve Safran** has been a police officer with the City of Hurst for twenty-two years. He has served time in patrol as both an officer and a supervisor, was a detective for eight years - specializing in family violence investigation, Internet crimes, and stalking - and was one of two officers to create the first Mall storefront in Texas. He has been a police instructor for twenty of those years teaching police report writing, criminal law, and a variety of Internet-related crime investigation.

**Commander Richard Obenhaus** is a retired intelligence officer, serving 24 years in the U.S. Navy and Naval Reserve. He's served his country in Asia, Europe, Australia, and the Middle East. A veteran of the Persian Gulf War, his direct involvement helped extricate Iraqi forces from Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm.

**Executive Deputy Fire Chief Hugo R. Esparza** has been with the Fort Worth Fire Department for thirty-one years. He oversees the Bureau of Fire Prevention, the Bomb Squad, and the Fire Alarm Office.

### Conference Schedule:

Friday Night Mixer, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. ~ Blue Mesa Grill

Come and mix it up with our conference speakers. Chat in a relaxed environment at the Blue Mesa Grill, enjoy some food and cocktails, and have a good time. Registration required.

Saturday Workshops, 9a.m.- 6p.m. ~ Fort Worth Botanic Garden

9 a.m. – 10 a.m. Q&A panel with Agent Elaine Spencer and Editor Tessa Woodward

10:15 a.m. – 11:45 Cherry Adair. In this fast moving, fun class learn how to layer dialog, action, narration and exposition to make your words sing on the page.

Noon – 1 p.m. Luncheon with Keynote speaker Cherry Adair

1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. Q&A panel with North Texas Heroes.

2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Cindy Dees presents advanced techniques in characterization.

4:45 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. Cherry Adair. Learn how to make your dialog sparkle and sing.

*Information on fees on page 16...*

# Fall Writers Roundup Information

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## Workshop Location:

Botanic Garden  
Redbud Hall  
3220 Botanic Garden Blvd.  
Fort Worth, Texas 76107  
(817)871-7686  
<http://www.fwbg.org/index2.htm>

## Workshop Hotel:

Courtyard by Marriott West/Lands  
End  
6530 West Freeway  
Fort Worth, Texas 76116  
(817)737-6923  
Special room rates for Fall Writers  
Roundup attendees, \$89  
\*ask for NTRWA rate  
<http://marriott.com/property/propertypage/DFWWL>

## Fees

Fall Writers Roundup, Saturday:  
  
Early Bird before October 14  
NT/DARA/Yellow Rose Members,  
\$75  
NON-Members, \$85

Late Registration after October 14  
NT/DARA/Yellow Rose Members,  
\$85  
NON-Members, \$95

\*\*Agent/Editor Appointment are  
scheduled on a first come, first  
served basis. Please specify who you  
would like an appointment with and  
you will receive an email confirma-  
tion.\*\*

## Mixer, Friday:

Special for workshop registrants, \$15  
Location: Blue Mesa Grill  
University Park Village  
1600 S. University Park Drive  
Fort Worth, 76107  
(817) 332-6372  
[www.blumesagrill.com](http://www.blumesagrill.com)

For more information, visit  
[www.ntrwa.org](http://www.ntrwa.org) or contact Shannon  
Canard, [scanard@sbcglobal.net](mailto:scanard@sbcglobal.net).

Did you know...?

RWA now has over 10,000 members  
worldwide.

## Spotlight On... Continued...

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*Continued from page 6...*

### ***Does it help your own writing that both you and your spouse write romance?***

Since Ron is a writer it really helps to be able to bounce ideas off of him. We will occasionally spend an evening at dinner tossing around ideas. Since he works out of the house, it helps when I get stuck if I can just holler out and ask a question. I must say, he has never turned me down when he's called on to help me "research" a scene. So I guess the answer is: it definitely helps.

### ***What do you consider your greatest accomplishment?***

My greatest accomplishment is that I was able to raise such a great well-rounded kid in such a wild time. I was a single parent for so

long, it seems impossible to raise a child to be respectful of people and mindful of the needs of those around them. But it is so much easier to raise a child correctly from the beginning than to try and raise bail for them later. I also have a fabulous marriage. Just to be in close quarters together every day amazes our family, that one of us hasn't been on the evening news recounting the "horrible explosion" or we aren't divorced. We just don't argue. We love being with each other all of the time. (Yeah, I know, barf!)

Professionally, I haven't had a greatest accomplishment yet. I suppose getting up every morning and putting my butt in the chair is some sort of accomplishment. It is the hardest thing I have done. It sounds trite. But I'm sure I'm not alone when I say there

are so many days I just want to give up, chuck it all and stay in bed forever. Never put words on paper again. I sometimes feel that all of the words sound the same, sort of like in the Charlie Brown cartoons – Waa, Waa, Waa Waa Waa.

New to romance writing, Gina Lee Nelson is *still* working to complete her first manuscript, a tender romance set in NYC, her stomping ground for seven exhilarating years.



# It's a Wrap: Writing a Satisfying Ending

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By Samantha Hunter

I was shocked to hear recently that JK Rowling might kill off Harry in the seventh and last Harry Potter book. What a horrible idea. Rowling claims that killing off major characters makes sense: real evil-doers tend to focus on the major players and want to kill them. But it's Harry Potter—Rowling doesn't exactly have to worry about realism. More important is her responsibility to her audience. What note does she want to leave them on? I don't like to think of millions of children losing their hero after wading through all of those thousands of pages.

However, this brings how important endings are into focus. Readers take endings very personally, especially when they concern characters we've come to care about. Writers focus so much energy on beginnings since that is usually what editors see, what sells a book. But I think readers receive the most satisfaction from a good ending, having left those early pages long behind. Though the first chapters are important to hook a reader into the story, the ending is what they'll remember.

Yet of all the questions I hear on message boards and writing lists, rarely does anyone ask about writing a good ending. Most people say they're happy to be done, thrilled to be finished, but they don't often ask about how to finish well. Maybe because most people know going in that a romance novel is going to end happily, and the hero and heroine are going to end up together, so it's just a matter of getting there?

Nothing could be farther from the truth. Even if a book is wonderful all the way through, if it has a rushed, pat, or otherwise clunky ending, it can ruin the entire experience. Endings should

leave a reader (as Jeannie London says) with a sigh.

The opinion of what makes a good or bad ending are probably as individual as readers are, but in my opinion, the worst way to end a book is the quickie wrap up. After all the trials and tribulations, the couple says "I love you" and slaps a stamp on their relationship in three pages or less. This is even worse if there has been some significant conflict—a hero and heroine who have serious arguments or issues to resolve—that seem to evaporate as soon as someone declares undying love. It's as if the writer said, "That's it, I'm done." Were they on deadline and late? Couldn't think of anything better? Bored and ready to be done? That's always what hits me when I come across a quickie wrap-up.

The best endings are often layered and they take their time making sure everything is rounded out in the story. You can tell the author cared about the ending as much as every other page of the book. They provide an unpredictable, complex or emotional ending. They might surprise you and keep you laughing or sighing or jumping out of your chair up until the last moment. Sometimes they make you cry, or make you wish it never did end. This is difficult to do, of course, but worth it to leave the reader feeling like they've just closed a book that ended well—and eager to find another by the same author.

One of the best endings I recall was from bestselling author Julie Leto, in her Harlequin Blaze, UP TO NO GOOD. Leto didn't get her characters together in the end—in fact, they parted ways and came back together later in an epilogue. Julie says, "When I got to the end of the book, I realized that the characters I created simply weren't ready for engagements and picket fences. They loved each other—

they were smart enough to realize that—but they also knew their lives weren't exactly in sync enough to make a real go of it. They both had some changes to make. In the end, this was the most satisfying ending I could give them and readers loved it."

In her Extreme Blaze, BEYOND THE EDGE, Susan Kearney actually has her heroine die in the end – but this doesn't prevent her from fashioning a surprising and dramatic happily ever after. And of course, anyone who reads Stephanie Plum remembers the infamous ending of HOT SIX—Evanovich's daring ending made some people stop reading all together, while others danced in suspenseful delight.

These endings are not for the faint of heart, and not everyone can pull them off but, if you do, you've crafted something special that readers will remember. It doesn't matter if you are published or aspiring—you have to write the best ending for your book, no matter what. Writing the last pages should be at least as difficult as the first ones—maybe more so—because that ending will really stay with a reader, for better or worse.

Samantha Hunter lives in Syracuse NY with her husband, two dogs, and cat. Formerly a university writing instructor, she quit teaching to write full time. She's been writing for sexy romance and romantic suspense for Harlequin Blaze since 2004. Her latest, HIDE & SEEK, is an August 2006 release, and is the 4th book in Blaze's Hot Wire series. Visit [www.samanthahunter.com](http://www.samanthahunter.com).

The preceding article first appeared in the August 2006 issue of New Jersey Romance Writers' The Heartline Herald. Permission to reprint is granted to sister RWA Chapters with credit to author and chapter.



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## Meeting Information

September 16, 2006

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NTRWA Monthly Meeting

La Hacienda Ranch

5250 Highway 121 South

Colleyville, TX

10:00 ~ 10:30 Meet & Greet  
10:30 ~ 10:45 Welcome & Announcements  
10:45 ~ 11:45 Workshop  
11:45 ~ 12:00 Break/Order Lunch  
12:00 ~ 1:00 Business Meeting

Visitors Welcome



Gail Dayton presents  
“So You Want to Write that Weird  
Stuff: A Guide to Fantasy/Futuristic/  
Paranormal Romance”